

"The Witching Hour" AND Other New Plays

Latest Work of Augustus Thomas Deals With Thought Transference—"The Toymaker of Nuremberg" a Success

(From Our New York Dramatic Correspondent.)

IN "The Witching Hour," at the Hackett theater, John Mason is appearing successfully as a star. The play, too, is a success, one that is perhaps ahead of the times in a measure as respects its central or controlling theme.

Augustus Thomas is the author of "The Witching Hour," and he should

be warmly congratulated on the skillful manner in which he has handled a most difficult subject and rendered it into a form suitable for stage presentation. Mr. Thomas bases his latest play on the supposition that one individual through thought can direct the actions of other individuals; that this thought can actually dominate other persons. In putting this phase of metaphysics so prominently forth on the stage Mr. Thomas establishes a precedent, and he will probably have many imita-

tors, provided his play has a long run. Other playwrights have touched on the subject of thought transmission, of mesmerism, etc., in various of their phases (Du Maurier in his treatment of the characters of Svennall and Trilby in "Trilby," for instance), but it has remained for Mr. Thomas to make the subject that on which practically an entire drama rests and depends.

The drama has an intense and powerful story. It is a melodrama when Brookfield that he (Brookfield) has strange telepathic powers, and Brookfield is thus led to study and exercise telepathic power.

Later a son of a widow (loved by Brookfield) becomes involved in a drunken carousal and kills a friend, a youth who had persisted in waving before the lad's eyes a peculiar catseye scarpin, for which the murderer had a pronounced dislike, a dislike so strong that it bordered on horror.

Hardmuth's fingers relax. The pistol falls to the floor. He steps back in amazement. "I'd like to know how in you did that," he blurts.

This situation, in which is concentrated the whole metaphysical uncertainty of the drama, supplies the climax of the story. It is vivid; but, even accepting the milder forms of Mr. Thomas' thesis, it is so improbable that it mars the veracity of the play. Yet the audience has been prepared for it by a system of logical reasoning and demonstration, and for that reason it is not without intense interest, nor does it fall of its purpose in the play's general upbuilding.

A peculiar reversal of feeling and action occurs in the last act, when Brookfield is assisted to escape arrest by Brookfield. The reason is this: The gambler believed that he himself was responsible for the murder of the governor elect, because he violently hated the governor elect and fervently had wished that he would meet death in the manner in which he finally was killed. Brookfield believed that his murderous wish and thought had been communicated involuntarily to other brains from his own and that the psychic influence of his thought guided the people who murdered the governor elect. Therefore, his conscience told him, he was morally as guilty as any one involved.

Capable Cast.

Mr. Mason in the role of Brookfield realized what must have been the author's own ideal for the character, a character both interesting and inconsistent.

The supporting members of the company also did excellent work in practically every instance. The play is well staged, and, in fact, there is no reason why "The Witching Hour" should not enjoy a long and profitable stay at the Hackett.

"The Toymaker of Nuremberg."

Charles Frohman has put on at the Garrick theater a new play by an American author, Austin Strong. Mr. Strong is not very well known to American theater goers. Very few people remember that he wrote a one act play used a couple of years ago by Francis Wilson, entitled "The Little Father of the Wilderness." This playlet showed that Mr. Strong has undoubted power in the painting of character and in making his characters human. He also wrote a one act play that has had considerable vogue in London, "The Dream of Oude."

"The Toymaker of Nuremberg" tells a simple story regarding a German toymaker and the love affair of his boy. The irrepressible Teddy bear comes in for a share of attention.

W. J. Ferguson heads the cast, and he never fails to entertain with his pleasing comedy work. Consuelo Bailey, Frank Wunderlee, Leo Her-

bert White and others appear in the cast.

Chauncey Olcott.

Chauncey Olcott has opened at the Liberty theater in "O'Neill of Derry," by Theodore B. Sayre. Olcott is once again seen as a dashing, captivating Irish gallant, whose legitimate prey is the heart of fair woman.

Frederick Ingelkes

ROBERTSON'S HAMLET.

Not since Edwin Booth has a Hamlet been seen who so completely and thoroughly satisfies as does that of Forbes Robertson. He more nearly approaches the standard set by Edwin Booth than any of the other players seen. He suggests that same finely aristocratic nature and that same scholarly which made the Booth Hamlet so notable. He does not make the prince so serious as did Booth, for he lightens many of the scenes with a smile and even with a laugh, and he causes the spectator to feel that Hamlet, despite his sorrow and the awful secret he bears, still looks upon the world and its folk with the eye of a philosopher and that he has not lost all interest in certain of life's pleasures and amusements.

This Hamlet receives the players with satisfaction and an appreciable degree of gladness. He is a man who even though in sorrow has kept up his practice in fencing and manly sports and who therefore goes as he tells Horatio with confidence into the test of skill with Laertes. It is this lighter tone in his Hamlet which makes the portrayal of Forbes Robertson superior in present day estimation even to that of Edwin Booth.

We have changed in our ideals and standards of acting since the day of the Booth Hamlet, and while undoubtedly the splendid power and high intellectuality of that great actor's portrayal would appeal to us strongly today, yet it is not impossible that the portrayal would not satisfy as completely as it did when it was among the actualities of the stage.

ORIGIN OF END MEN.

One of the oldest living minstrels tells the origin of the "end man" and his jokes as part of that style of entertainment. He says that in 1842 Dan Emmett, who wrote Dixie, and Frank Brower were in the same company, and the latter broke a string on his violin. Emmett sat next to him, and, as the audience silently waited, he began to joke Brower and make fun of him. Both were witty, and their impromptu jokes made a hit. They repeated the "end man" remarks the next night and thus "end men" and their jokes became a regular thing.



THELMA RAYE, NEW STAGE BEAUTY WHO HAS CAPTURED NEW YORK, IN "THE DAIRY MAIDS."

be warmly congratulated on the skillful manner in which he has handled a most difficult subject and rendered it into a form suitable for stage presentation.

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put to the test of strict analysis, and it is so because the subject matter required that it be so, not merely because the author or producer desired to "tear up" the emotions of the audience.

Jack Brookfield is a gambler. His palace of chance (and mischance) has its habitat in Louisville, Ky. Brookfield has many handsome paintings decorating his walls, and a judge of the United States supreme court, interested in paintings, calls to view a famous old masterpiece. This judge

The accused, Clay Whipple, is, because of the violent efforts of Frank Hardmuth, an assistant prosecuting attorney, found guilty and condemned to death. This attorney and the condemned had been rivals in love for the hand of the same girl, a niece of Brookfield.

Now an appeal is taken. Whipple's mother and Brookfield, pending decision on the appeal, visit Washington to see the judge.

He recognizes Mrs. Whipple as the daughter of a former sweetheart of

brated Goebel once), and at what he considered a psychological moment Brookfield caused the accusation, well substantiated, to be published broadcast in the newspapers.

Whipple is acquitted by the jury. The prosecutor (Hardmuth), infuriated at Brookfield's disclosure of his own crime, rushes upon the gambler with a revolver, intent upon murder.

"You can't shoot that gun," Brookfield exclaims, looking him squarely in the eyes. "You can't pull that trigger. You can't even hold that gun!"

Some Branches of Winter Sport—Pugilistic Topics

ENTER now the season of winter sport. While it is true that winter pastimes, whether indoor or outdoor, are by no means so popular as summer recreations, this fact is due to the larger number of pleasure seekers that exist in warm weather. The winter is the great vacation season. The winter is the great work and study season. Consequently no winter sport will ever rank in popularity with the leading summer pastimes.

But, even admitting the truth of the foregoing statements, there is no reason why winter sports should be considered with lamentation. There are, in fact, so many popular forms of cold weather recreation that one hardly can decide on which to adopt.

Undoubtedly a decided advance will occur in the skating world this winter. The unfortunate fight between the two leading amateur bodies last year practically decreased interest in the annual contests to some extent. Now, however, the Amateur Athletic union has withdrawn from the position it

took last year, after touching the rival organization a most valuable lesson, and it is certain that organized amateur skating will be conducted on a higher plane in this country than heretofore, owing to the action of the Amateur Athletic union last year.

Ice Yacht Situation.

At present there seems little chance of any new developments of great importance in ice yachting. Unfortunately there seems to be but little demand for an east versus west series of races. One of the fastest ice skimmers of the east is now in the middle west, lying on the borders of a Wisconsin lake, but probably will not be placed in commission this season.

Motor Boat Ice Racing.

Motor boat racing on ice, a new form of outdoor winter sport last year, bids fair to obtain wide prominence this season in the east. The motor boats used in this novel way are especially built for the purpose, having three or four runners reaching almost from



GREAT YALE GOLF TEAM, COLLEGE CHAMPIONS OF AMERICA.

The members of the Yale golf team, one of the ablest teams that ever represented an American college, are as follows (reading from left to right): Merriman, Knowles, Partridge, Abbott (captain), Van Vleck, Lyon.

stem to stern. Amidships, or possibly a very few feet aft of the beam, a trunk is erected, very similar to a centerboard trunk on a sailing craft. Suspended in this trunk is a stout metal wheel, through the flat rim of which project strong, sharp steel prongs, which, when the wheel revolves, dig into the ice and propel the craft at a terrific pace, provided the motor is powerful enough. The motor is placed in the stern, of course.

On Great South bay, Long Island, N. Y., last winter these ice motor boats were first used, and great interest was aroused because of the speed they attained.

The ice must be comparatively clean to give best results. If the snow is at all deep the progress of the craft is greatly hindered.

Moran's Victory Over Neil.

The defeat of Frankie Neil, champion bantamweight of California and the Pacific coast, by Owen Moran, champion bantam of all England, puts

it up to Abe Attell, the American title holder, to provide the next entertainment for the British invader. Moran walloped Neil in so decisive a manner that the American has practically no ground on which to demand a return match. Moran outclasses him. That's all there is to it.

In but three or four rounds out of the sixteen during which the bout continued did Neil compare with Moran. In those few rounds, however, it must be said to Neil's credit that he won an advantage over the foreigner. Twice Moran was knocked off his pins by the native son, but Frankie didn't have the steam to follow up his advantage and shove a knockout over on Moran. After the fifth round Moran had the upper hand of the whole argument.

That Moran could give Attell a rousing go, no one present at the recent bout at Dreamland pavilion, San Francisco, can rightfully deny. Not a few American fight fans will wager their new gold coins, adorned with busts of owls and side show Indians, that the

Britisher will steal the championship candy from the fast and foxy Attell.

A 300 Pound Rival For Gotch.

Duluth is just now priding itself on having developed the only 300 pound wrestler of ability that has ever claimed the United States as his home. Sten Waldstrom is the name of the ponderosity, and he is certain that he would be able to make champion Frank Gotch look like a beginner.

Waldstrom owns a candy store in Duluth, and he has long been a pupil of Martin Johnson, Duluth's clever fireman-wrestler. Waldstrom argues that his great weight would render it impossible for Gotch to secure on him any of his famous holds, except, possibly, the torturing toe and ankle hold. This latter hold is the especial pride of the champion. He is firmly convinced that there is no wrestler in the world who could resist this hold, not even barring the big Japanese and Turkish wrestlers that are sometimes heard from.

Waldstrom hopes to find some wealthy backer who will finance a match with Gotch, but of course the champion would not take him on until the big candy seller had met and defeated some of the lesser lights.

CHARLES E. EDWARDS.

PLANS FOR MEXICAN RACING. Louis Blum, who has been purchasing horses for officials of the Mexican government throughout the country, says that the first meeting at Mexico City will be held in September of 1908. Blum admits that his purchases are not the highest class that could be made, but says that he is trying to get the best he can for the appropriation allowed to him. The first Mexican Derby will be run in 1910 and will be of the value of \$20,000. Territorial Governor Escandon is chairman of the movement to have the new track placed near Condesa, outside of Mexico City. It will cost close to \$4,000,000. The old track near the city, on which Colonel Bob Pate held race meetings several years ago, will be abandoned.

Mexican men of wealth for whom Blum is purchasing horses, in the effort to boom the thoroughbred industry throughout Mexico, are Porfirio Diaz, Jr., eldest son of President Diaz; Landa y Escandon, Senators Lec Cerna, Lec Alcala, F. Auror, A. de Orena and M. Castello. Among his purchases are the stallions Four Nations, Double Scotland, Don Caesar, Golden Sunrise, Madison, Room Mate, Mr. Brown and Handy Bill.

WILL PLAY BALL ALL YEAR ROUND.

J. Cal Ewing, president of the Pacific Coast Baseball league, makes the statement that the coast league will have six teams next season and that continuous baseball will be played in three cities.

"The idea next year," said Ewing, "is to form a six league team, with extra teams at Long Beach or some other town near Los Angeles, and at Astoria, a few miles from Portland, Ore. With such an arrangement continuous baseball can be played at San Francisco, Los Angeles and Portland, and the crowds of baseball fans can be held together better."

ENGLISH SHELL FOR HARVARD OARSMEN.

Harvard oarsmen are interested in the arrival of the shell which was built in England last summer for the Crimston crew of next season. The shell is a gift from W. C. Laylies of Los Angeles of '54, and there is much speculation as to what the Harvard oarsmen can accomplish in the new boat, which differs radically from those built in this country.

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GET RICH QUICK.

Schemes of this class have again come to grief along with the gullible investors, causing serious loss to innocent business concerns, as is always the case of panics in Wall St.

While this last lesson is yet fresh in mind, it is an opportune moment to consider causes and means to avoid like trouble in the future.

Direct your attention to that greatest of all Newspapers the Cincinnati Enquirer. From its columns one can readily detect the trend of currency, its lodging places, by whom handled, uses made of it, and final results.

Again you read quotations of Bonds, Stocks, and Securities of every nature, fixing Status of all business from the retailer, to United States Government.

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Its extra size and high price, is the secret of its ability to discover, obtain, print and serve its patrons with all the news, and cater to wants of people in every calling of life.

The Weekly Enquirer for the year 1908 has greatly increased its Clubbing offers which now include the most select and popular publications of the day at prices slightly over half the regular Subscription rates.

Do not overlook the fact that the year 1908 promises to excel in prosperity any of the past, and that the Enquirer printed at Cincinnati, Ohio, is one of the most reliable sources of information.

Shakespeare and Burgery.
The fact that Shakespeare was ahead of his times is proved by a line in "The Taming of the Shrew," where one of the characters says: "My master hath appointed me to go to St. Luke's to bid the priest be ready to come, against you come with your appendix."



ZBYSKO, HUNGARIAN WRESTLER, EXECUTING A BAR HOLD.

A great revival in wrestling has been in progress in London. Mat stars from several countries have been competing at the London pavilion for the honor of meeting Champion Hackenschmidt. One of the ablest men in the respect mat affairs in London is Zbysko, the noted Hungarian heavyweight.